

AN AUTHENTICK

ACCOUNT

OF THE

Condemnation and Execution

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Prince *Nicolas Wolinski*,

Great Hunter and Master of the Cabinet (or
Prime Minister) to her Imperial Majesty the
late CZARINA of *Russia*.

Who was accused by his *Country* of, being an
Enemy to her *Majesty's Government*, and con-
triving the Subversion thereof, by traiterously
Oppressing and *defrauding* the Subjects in his
Exactions, and *deceiving* the Empress by *false*
and *pernicious Councils*, for which he was exe-
cuted on the 12th of *July* last.

With a particular Relation of his taking Leave
of his Children, the Death of his Lady, who
expired with Grief at their Interview, the
Manner of his Beheading and last Farewell to
the Spectators.

By M. MENZIKOWITZ, a Native of *Russia*.

L O N D O N:

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THE Empire of *Russia*, which before the Time of *Peter the Great*, was scarce known in *Europe*, or at best no otherwise than as a Country, inhabited by Brutes and Boors, has within a Century shook off the Rust of Ages, and become the Admiration of its Neighbours; it is now to be esteem'd inferior to none in Arts and Sciences, or in military Expeditions and

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Politicks ; that Country where a Century ago, there was no such Thing as a Prime Minister to be heard of, has within these few Years been governed by as regular and well concerted System of Politicks as the most polite of us can boast. Their Ministers, Generals, &c. have been raised for their Merit alone, and if by being intoxicated with Ambition they have made an ill Use of that Favour, which placed them near the Throne, and abased the Protection of their Sovereign by oppressing their Fellow Subjects, the Royal Ear has been constantly open to the Meanest who have sought Redress ; and the vain Favourite, elated with his Success, has been given up to the Complaints of the People, stripp'd of all his ill-got Plunder, and met with the just Reward of his Perfidy ; how happy would it be for the People if Sovereigns, who boast themselves Lords of Nations more civilized, would follow this great, this good Example, and be ever ready to hear the Cries of their Subjects oppress'd by powerful Villany, which daily abuse the too credulous, or too indolent Monarch. Even we, who boast ourselves free, should not groan under such a Weight
of

of Taxes, if the rapacious Plunderers were to be called to a strict Account, and constrained to refund their ill-got Gains into the publick Treasury. Notwithstanding that seems at present impossible, while Corruption bears such universal Sway, it may not be amiss to shew how neighbouring Nations treat those Trampers of their Rights, that my Countrymen may see what ought to be done in such a Case, and that the Persons guilty may make them some Amends by discontinuing their male Practices for the future, and each may say to himself in him; *Felix quem faciunt aliena Pericula cautum.*

THE Subject of the following Narration was a Gentleman who had received as many Favours from his Sovereign, as any one possibly could: He was exalted to a very eminent Station in the *Russian* Court; yet so badly did he apply the Great Trust and Authority reposed in him, that the very Sovereign, who had promoted Him, was constrained to give him up to his injured Country, and condemn the Traytor, tho' she pitied and esteem'd the Man.

It will be necessary before we come to the Particulars of the Catastrophe of this unhappy Gentleman, to take a short View of the fatal Measures he engaged in, which at last brought him to a shameful and ignominious End; and which if they had not, must, at last, have involved his Empress, her Adherents, and his Country in one general Ruin.

WOLINSKI had for a long Time enjoyed his Empress's Favour to a very eminent Degree; he possessed several Posts of considerable Honour and Profit, was privy to their secret Counsels and Transactions of State, and was, as we stile it, at the Helm of Affairs; yet notwithstanding he was thus caressed, he could not at the same Time desist from following the Dictates of his own villainous Inclinations, by counterplotting those Schemes, which by his Post he was obliged to encourage, and by secretly joining with those Enemies which in his Office, as Minister, he was to endeavour to disconcert and destroy.

IT is notorious to every one that some time ago, a Discovery was made of a Negotiation being carried on between *Sweden* and the *Porte*, which must have been very prejudicial, if not entirely destructive to the *Russian* Empire. This Negotiation was carried on thro' the Chicanery of the Court of *France*, who has convinced all *Europe* of late Years what a troublesome Neighbour she is to several Potentates. By what means, this secret Transaction was discover'd is yet unknown to the World; but the Death of the unhappy Major *Sinclair*, it is thought gave the first Light to the unravelling this dark and intricate Mystery. By whom that unfortunate Gentleman was deprived of Life, I can't take upon me to say, nor is it our Business here to examine into, or search into the Reflections, which at that Time were made by several Courts on the *Russians*; let it suffice, that the C Z A R I N A published a Manifesto, wherein she clear'd her Ministers from any Odium that might be thrown on them or her upon that Occasion.

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HOWEVER, it was this Incident gave light, not only into many Machinations, and Intrigues of the Court of *France*, but also the Designs of several other Potentates in actual Combination with her; Copies of several Papers were privately procured and transmitted to *Russia*, which convinced the *Czarina* how far several of her own Subjects, and even those some of the nearest to her Person, were concerned in the black Design of creating Disturbances in the *North*, and consequently of disturbing the Tranquillity of *Europe* in general. Among Numbers who were afterwards found in this Conspiracy, the unhappy *Wolinski* proved to be one of the first; nay, so far was he involved in the horrid Contrivance, that he who shared an equal Share in his royal Mistress's Favour with the highest, was foremost to set afoot the Subversion of her Government, and betray his Country to it's foreign and avowed Enemy the *Swede*; but their secret Transactions and Correspondence being betrayed, the *Czarina*, by the Advice and Assistance of the brave Count *Munich*, the Duke of *Courland*, and that upright and indefatigable Minister Count *Osterman*, called a Consulta-
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tion of them and others, her most trusty and
 able Counsellors of State, to debate what
 Measures were properest to take in such a
 Dilemma, who accordingly assembled pri-
 vately at her Palace a little Distance from
Petersburgh ; where, being met, She open-
 ed to them the Occasion of their meeting at
 such an Emergency in a Speech, to the fol-
 lowing Purport ; “ That, notwithstanding
 “ she had endeavoured to do every thing in
 “ her Power for the Safeguard and enriching
 “ her Subjects ; That notwithstanding God
 “ had blessed her Endeavours with unex-
 “ pected Success, had given her Arms to
 “ conquer and made her victorious over the
 “ Common Enemy, the *Turk* ; where-
 “ by she hoped she had now established
 “ Peace in her Dominions, and given an
 “ Opportunity for her Subjects to extend,
 “ and carry on their Trade in Security to
 “ the farthest Parts of the Earth ; yet she
 “ had received certain Informations and un-
 “ deniable Proofs that several of her Sub-
 “ jects, (whom she had carested more than
 “ others, being deceived by their seeming
 “ Honesty and Zeal to serve her,) had con-
 “ spired together, influenced by the Bribes
 “ and

“ and other flattering Promises of the *Swedish*
 “ Ministers to betray her and their Coun-
 “ try, and for that Purpose, and the better
 “ to perpetrate that horrid Design, had not
 “ only kept an unlawful and secret Corres-
 “ pondence abroad, but by frequent and un-
 “ precedented Cruelties and Exactions had
 “ render’d her Government disagreeable to
 “ her Subjects at Home ; to prevent which,
 “ and justly to punish them according to their
 “ Demerits, was the Reason of her calling
 “ them to her Assistance, and hoped they
 “ would duely consider it and advice her for
 “ the best : ” Concluding with an appeal
 to the Deity, that Cruelty was the furthest
 Thing from her Nature, and praying, that
 he would conduct her and them thro’ this
 perilous Affair, that nothing but Justice or
 Mercy if there was any Room might predo-
 minate.

ACCORDINGLY the proper Proofs
 and Vouchers being laid before them, they
 proceeded to debate on what was best to be
 done, and came to this Resolution that it
 was absolutely necessary to seize the Per-
 sons and Papers, of *Wolinski*, in particular,
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and his Accomplices immediately, accordingly he was taken in Bed, in the Dead o Night, and conveyed under a strong Guard to the Fortrefs, *July* the 2d. He remained there two Days before Commissaries could be appointed to examine him, and as our Intelligencies in these private Conferences must be very slight, it is impossible to relate the Particulars, and we must rely only upon what the Court of *Petersburg* thinks proper to communicate, which Account from the foreign Gazettes of that Time runs thus: After the siezing of the Conspirators to the Number of thirty or more, an extraordinary Assembly was held, at which assisted the principal Members of the Synod; the Report of the Commissaries who were charged with the Examination of the Prisoners in the Fortrefs, amongst whom were several Ecclesiasticks, was deliberated upon in the Assembly, the greatest Part of the Prisoners were order'd to receive Sentence in a few Days, and to be executed before the Empress came from *Petershoff* to *Petersburg*, whither she had retired upon the first Discovery of this melancholy Affair; but as she was willing to be present at the Examination, or rather

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formal Trial of *Wolinski*, he was reserved 'till she came; and for this Reason, because when he was apprehended he had given all necessary Light into the Affairs within his Knowledge. The Empress shew'd with what Regret she was obliged to proceed with Rigour in this Affair, by withdrawing from the Scene of Justice as soon as she had appointed proper Commissaries, lest her Mercy should too much get the better of what was but Justice absolutely necessary. And when the Report was made to her of their Proceedings, she said with a Perplexity natural to great and good Minds: *There are many People guilty; their Crimes are very great; I am under a Necessity of doing myself Justice, I shall nevertheless still exercise Clemency.*

AN Insurrection, or something like it, thus nipt in the Bud, and this so soon after the Murder of *Sinclair*, which I mentioned before, gave Rise to various Speculations and Reports, there were not wanting some, tho' but few, that were busied in defending *Wolinski*, and speaking harshly of his Opponents, while on the other hand his Oppressions and Extortions had got him too many
 Enemies

Enemies that their Remonstrances were born down with the Tide, yet this did not hinder the Foreign Ministers and Residents from endeavouring to search into the Motives of such extraordinary Proceedings. This extremely dissatisfied the Court, to find that every Thing which had any Relation to the Court of *Russia* was very minutely known in foreign Countries, and that in spite of the Precautions taken by the Court to conceal the Knowledge of them; as there is scarcely a Possibility to prevent Things from being divulged by Means of Foreign Ministers, Count *D'Osterman* took an Opportunity to tell several of the Principal of them in Conversation; *That they ought not too readily to give Credit to the Reports in Relation to public Affairs, which were current even in the City of Petersburg, because the Ministry found themselves obliged to cause Things to be related abroad, for which there was not the least foundation, as they themselves sometimes could not but be sensible of.* The foreign Ministers considering what was said to them on this Subject, as a Sort of a Reprimand did not think proper to enter into any further Explication

thereupon, than only to tell the Count they were sensible what he said was Fact.

MATTERS were still carried on with the utmost Secrecy in regard to M. *Wolinski*, and among the many Things laid to his Charge, all the Notice the Publick could get was, that he had undoubtedly held private Correspondence with the *Swedish* Ministers, and had received several large Remittances from thence, to induce him to obstruct and retard the Councils of the Court of *Petersburg* 'till their Designs were ripe for Execution. The Commissaries were indefatigable in their Proceedings, and the more they searched into this dark Scene of Villany, the blacker his Crimes appeared. He was at first, as I observed before, used with less Rigour than the others, because when he was apprehended he seemed ready and willing to confess all that he knew, but this was only an Artifice as they found afterwards, to take of the Odium from himself, and throw it upon his Accomplices; and in doing this he had given in a fallacious Account, which several of them when they came to die not only confuted,

but

but even accused him of Things, which before were unknown to the Commissaries; a Foreign Minister who was there at that Time writes to his Correspondent here in the following Manner. “*M. Wolinski* continuing to deny several Things that were laid to his Charge, and which there was the strongest Reason to believe were true was put to the Torture; upon which he acknowledged himself guilty of many great and important Crimes, amongst the Articles of Accusation that were brought against him, the following were very particular, *viz.* That he had said several Times to different Persons, that the Reign of the *Germans* could not long continue in *Russia*; that he had express’d himself in Terms which shew’d great Disrespect to the Person of the Duke of *Courland*; and that he had one Day said, that if his Dreams should prove true the *Swedes* would be at *Petersburg* before the Year 1741. But besides these Things, he was found guilty of several treasonable Practices, which were incontestably proved against Him.” Thus far the Ambassador: After he had passed several Examinations, the Commissaries

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unanimously agreed to find him guilty of Death, and adjudged him to the usual Death appointed for Persons guilty of such capital Offences, which was afterwards respited by the *Czarina*. But as the most particular Account I can give of the Catastrophe of this unhappy Minister was communicated to me by Mr. *Menzikowitz* a *Russian* Gentleman ; I can't do better than give it the Publick in his own Words.

AFTER the Commissaries had given their Judgment, their remained only for the *Czarina* to confirm it, to pass Sentence, sign it, and appoint the Execution. Accordingly the 10th of *July* 1740 about five a Clock in the Morning, came all belonging to the Court of Justice, to the Palace of her Imperial Majesty, in particular four Advocates, then a Judge, two Generals, and two of the Clergy, and last two Counsellors. As soon as they came to the Palace, her Imperial Majesty was informed of it, who had been above two hours on her Knees steadfastly praying to the Almighty Being, that he would inspire them with his Divine Grace to do all that was right in his Sight, neither had her
Impe-

Imperial Majesty taken any Refreshment, nor Rest from Nine a Clock the Morning before. Sometime after they had been there her Imperial Majesty came to the Hall of Audieme, and setting on the Throne, the Accusation and Sentence of the Criminal *Wolinski* was read, and when she heard that they had sentenced him to have his Tongue pulled out of his Mouth, and to be broke alive on the Wheel, she showed that she was not pleased at the Sentence in that cruel manner, and said it was barbarous to destroy a Creature in in the Way they had proposed ; for as much as Men are Debtors to Nature but once, and therefore her Imperial Majesty mitigated the Sentence, and ordered his right Hand should be cut off, and then his Head ; and after the Sentence was drawn up in due Form her Majesty signed the same ; but it would break the most cruel Heart to see this great Princess, in the Agony which this unlucky Incident threw her into, when she took the Pen in her Hand to sign the Dead Warrant, a Flood of Tears fell from her Eyes, and she was so much disorder'd that she had hardly Power to sign the same : Which when done, her Majesty was taken ill, caused by
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the great Grief and Trouble she suffered in carrying on this grand Affair. Two Priests which were there, then walked to the Prison in a mournful Manner, wherein was the Prince *Wolinski*, and when he saw the Priests, he cried out in a despairing Manner: *Oh! Heaven, now is my Fall certain, thou art too just to let this Evil pass unpunished.* The Lord *Uschaschow*, after he had been by the Priests admonished, read the Sentence to him as follows:

“ YOU, NICHOLAS WOLINSKI, have
 “ for many Years committed many Acts of
 “ High Treason against Her Imperial Ma-
 “ jesty: And you have a Thousand Ways
 “ endeavoured to turn the Kingdom upside
 “ down: You have, by private Acts of
 “ Oppression and Extortion, abused the
 “ high Power and Confidence we reposed
 “ in you, and you have so managed that
 “ Numbers of our poor Subjects have been
 “ ruined by your laying on them continual
 “ and heavy Taxes, contrary to our express
 “ Orders, and without our Privy and Con-
 “ sent: You have been guilty of the Deaths
 “ of several innocent Persons, who have fal-
 “ len

" len as Victims to your covetous Temper:
 " And, lastly, not content with amassing
 " to yourself immense Wealth by privately
 " plundering and oppressing our dear and in-
 " jured Subjects, you have been traiterous
 " to the Trust which we delegated to you,
 " by robbing our Kingdom and Country of
 " the Treasures collected for their Use, and
 " employing them to protect and encourage
 " our Enemies, or to satisfy your own fini-
 " ster Views by enriching or gratifying your
 " Dependents and Hirelings. These and ma-
 " ny more Things laid to your Charge, our
 " Judges, &c. have deem'd you guilty of
 " High Treason against our Sacred Majesty,
 " and of being a Traitor to your Country,
 " for which Cause, and many more wicked
 " Actions, you are condemned to have your
 " Tongue pulled out of your Mouth by the
 " Roots, and to be broke alive on the Wheel,
 " and to live three Hours before you receive
 " the last Stroke, to put you out of your
 " Misery."

HARDLY, had the Lord *Uſchachow* said
 these Words, but the Lord *Wolinski* fell into
 a Swoon, flat on his Face, and the People

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did

did all they could to recover him again to his Senses, which with some Difficulty they effected, and when he recovered, the Lord *Ufchachow* went on thus :

“ NOTWITHSTANDING your Sentence
 “ was as you have heard, and all this you
 “ have deserved most justly, and if it was
 “ possible double that Torture, yet hath our
 “ Most Gracious Sovereign thought good,
 “ in part to mitigate your Sentence, which
 “ is to have now your Right Hand cut off,
 “ and then your Head, and so thank Heaven
 “ and her Majesty for such a gracious
 “ Favour.”

WHEREUPON the Lord *Wolinski* made a Reverend Bow, before the General, to show his Thankfulness, after which he was desired by the Priest to prepare himself to die, and he seemed to be very easy and contented, to receive that Lot that was ordered for him ; he desired the Favour only to take a last Farewell of his Wife and Children, which was denied him, but it coming to the Ear of her Majesty, she gave a present Order, that his Wife and four Children should see him. Nothing

thing in the World could be more moving
 than this parting from his Dear Spouse, for
 she was as beautiful and virtuous as any in
Russia, so took her everlasting Farewell with
 a flood of Tears; nevertheless, she had Cou-
 rage in her Adversity to encourage him that
 caused her great Grief, and Trouble : She
 desired him to have a true and upright Sor-
 row, for all the Misdeeds he had done, a-
 gainst God Almighty, and Her Majesty.
 “ Have Courage my Lord’ says she, and
 “ think that Death is always ready for us
 “ from our Birth to the Time of our Depar-
 “ ture out of this World, and this Suffering
 “ may bring you to everlasting Life, which
 “ you by a true Repentance, and trusting in
 “ God’s Mercies, will surely obtain, although
 “ a just and righteous Judgment takes you
 “ now from my Tenderness, yet be certain,
 “ I shall accompany you to the Grave ; and
 “ that tho’ I die not by your Side, yet know
 “ I shall only live a most troublesome and
 “ melancholly Life, as long as it shall please
 “ the Most High to make me endure it, and
 “ which will be to me like a continual Death.
 “ Come, my dear Children, come forth,
 “ said she, (speaking to her four Children)

“ come, and take a last Farewell from your
 “ unfortunate Father, take Notice of him ;
 “ and be mindful that Wickedness however
 “ so privately acted, yet it many times comes
 “ to receive its Reward here openly.”

THE Children cried most bitterly, but their Mother said this without shedding a Tear however troubled to her Soul. He embraced them all one after another, and made a serious and pathetick Speech, becoming a Christian to them all ; exhorting them to walk upright and be just in all their Doings, and to give no Ear to the Devil, when he shall tempt them with Riches and Honour, so as not to be brought to that cruel and unhappy End he was. He embraced them once again one after the other, and also his tender Spouse, who was hardly got to her House, but she was seized with a Palpitation on her Heart, and died in less than three Hours. This was the End of one of the most noble Women in all *Russia*, and Heaven seem'd by this, to favour her, that she did not live to hear of the reproachful Death of her Spouse.

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THE 12th Day of *July*, in the Morning about Seven o' Clock, the Lord *Wolinski* was brought out of the Prison; and after the Sentence had been again read to him, he seem'd to be satisfied with it, and desired them to proceed in the Execution as soon as they could; for his Life was now become a Burthen to him, and the more so on the sudden Death of his Spouse, with which they had acquainted him. When the Executioner would have blinded his Eyes, he desired it might not be done; for he was certain he should not be afraid, but should receive his Death with Gladness: And at his Request he was not blinded. Then he kneeled and made a powerful moving Speech to all the People about, and persuading them to be always faithful to her Imperial Majesty, and to merit her Affections. After which he made an humble Confession of all his evil Deeds, and thank'd God for the Grace that was granted to him by her Majesty's Goodness, and then having made a fervent Prayer to God by himself; first his Right Hand was cut off; and afterwards kneeling down on the Scaffold, he received the Rewards due
for

for his wicked Works, by having his Head
sever'd from his Body with one Blow.

THERE were five of his Accomplices who
were brought out of the Fortrefs at the same
Time ; of which M. *Jeropkin*, Intendant of
the Buildings, and M. *Krouchoff*, Counsellor
of the Admiralty were afterwards beheaded ;
M. *Somiono*, Vice president of the Admiralty,
and Commissary General, and M. *Eickler*,
Secretary of the Cabinet, were also condemn-
ed to die ; but the Empress remitted the
Sentence of Death, and the first received
Seventeen and the other twenty-five Strokes
of the *Knoute*, and were banished into *Siberia*,
tho' it has always been customary in *Russia*
to confiscate the whole Estate of Persons ex-
ecuted for Capital Crimes, yet the Empress
order'd the Patrimony of M. *Wolinski* to be
given to his Children, and that only which
he had acquired under the Crown to be for-
feited.

THUS fell the great *Wolinski*, a Man fa-
mous throughout *Russia* for his natural Parts,
and the eminent Degree of Favour he posses-
sed with the Empress. And all I would ob-
serve

serve to my Countrymen is, that it is unhappy for them the rapacious *Wolinski's* of this Kingdom cannot have as nice a Scrutiny into their Conduct; for if they could it would make them disgorge some Millions of the publick Plunder, and reimburse the Nation some of its most grievous Taxes, but as this is impossible, we may be apt to say as they themselves would on Reflection upon this Remark, that upon a late extraordinary Affair it was well for *our Wolinski* that He was not Prime Minister of *Russia*.

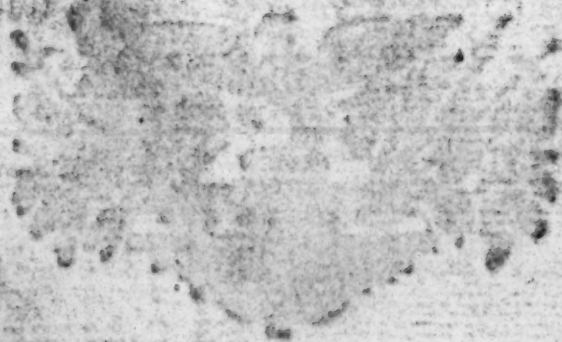
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to be to my Countrymen is that it is not
happy for them the Republics which of
this Kingdom cannot have as nice a security
into their Condemn; for they could it would
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publick Treasures, and reimburse the Nation
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is impossible, we are apt to say as they
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